CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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CANADA

Questions Related to Work in the Conference on Disarmament on Negative Security Assurances

Canada's basic question with respect to the possibility of negotiating an instrument in the Conference on negative security assurances, first asked formally in the Conference's Plenary on February 26, remains: "who is to give what to whom and how?". The following paper expands on that question.

Who?

Among other steps, we have reviewed Ad Hoc Committee Report of 1994 (CD/1275 of August 30, 1994). In that report each of the P5 felt the need to make specific statements on their positions; since then, we have had further individual P5 statements and then UN Security Council Resolution 984 (1995). The Western Group also had a formal statement of position; so did other specific delegations.

There are several initial questions: Has there been any change in the collective P5 position (per the Russian Federation suggestion in 1994) or in individual P5 positions since that time? Are they prepared in principle to move beyond those positions? Does China, for example, continue to see a P5 agreement on 'No First Use' as the answer? Has the UK changed its views on NSA scope/applicability? Does France maintain its "three elements"? The National Security Blueprint of the Russian Federation published in December 1997 indicates that Russian policy remains doubtful on this concept. Do the P5 continue to see NSAs as directly linked to commitments under the NPT? Is any one of the P5 prepared "to expand the role of NSAs" so as to cover all Weapons of Mass Destruction scenarios?

And, beyond the P5, how does the Conference propose to take into account those states in the Conference which for their own considered reasons have decided upon a position of "nuclear ambiguity"? Do they provide and/or receive NSAs? Do they provide NSAs to each other via the Conference? Do they provide NSAs to others?;

Others may have other questions or concerns.

What?

This sub-question refers specifically to the nature and scope of any NSAs. We could expand thereon but beyond highlighting its difficulties, we leave this aspect to possible future discussion.

To Whom?

Do only NPT non-nuclear-weapon states qualify? Do NPT non-nuclear-weapon states "in good standing" qualify? Do NPT non-nuclear-weapon states not members of any security alliance with or without a nuclear-weapon state member qualify? This is obviously a rather complex sub-question. A preliminary exchange on this would greatly clarify what, if anything, the Conference might try to achieve.

iv) How?

What arrangements might the Conference consider? A multilaterally negotiated, legally-binding treaty? Or some other objective?

These are all complex issues which, in our view, could be usefully addressed in order to help us to understand what, if any, useful progress the Conference might make in this area.